7: Thompson--370-371 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 692, 177.69 France
636.69

"The Resident Superior is at the head of native justice, which is administered by native magistrates under the control of French ad-[371]ministrators. As yet there is no specialization of administrative and judicial powers, since magistrates are taken from the civil service. The general organization of the courts resembles that of the other countries of the Union. Unimportant cases are settled by the heads of the villages and cantons. Important suits are sent to the provincial courts, which are presided over by the administrative head of the province and native judges. A higher court judges appeals from the provincial courts and is placed under the Resident Superior, French, and native judges. Wholly French courts exist for European cases."

whatsoever of respect is to be seen in this liberty.

3. JUDICIAL SYSTEM

692
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In French Laos, justice is meted out by the native tribunals:
1. In accordance with the codes of Vien-Tiane (1) or Luang-

(1) See Appendix XXIX.

Prabang for all individuals of the Thai race and for Khas of certain tribes;

2. In accordance with the Burmese customs which are peculiar to the Lus of the territory of Muong-Sing;

3. In accordance with their particular customs for the individuals of various races--Meos, Yaos, etc.--who are not subject to any of the above codes.

The judgments of the native tribunals are examined, and revised or approved if the need should arise, by the French authorities.

Matters of little importance, such as those which fall under the jurisdiction of our justices of the peace, are settled by canton heads or the heads of villages.

Acts qualified as criminal by our law are judged by a mixed province tribunal presided over by the government commissioner who is head of the province. He is seconded by a native assessor and by a secretary-clerk. Such tribunals sit in the capital of each province. [498] In reaching its decisions, it takes its inspiration from the native laws and customs, insofar as they agree with our sentiments of humanity and dignity and with the spirit of French law. It judges appeal cases which have already come before the native tribunals.

Finally a superior court, presided over by the superior resident aided by two assessors, one European and the other a native, fulfills the functions of a court of appeal with respect to the mixed province tribunals.

Foreign Orientals, that is to say Annamites, Cambodians, Chinese, Burmese, Siamese, etc., may be judged only by the mixed province tribunals. As for Europeans, they are subject only to the regularly constituted French tribunals of Tonkin and Cochinchina.

693 The venality of the magistrates in Laos cannot be denied, as in all of the Far East, and the natives generally prefer our arbitration to that of their natural judges. They say that we render justice free of charge, while their own magistrates take more notice of the offerings